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⇒BOOK & NOTICES.⇐

INSPIRATION.*

This book is a collection of addresses delivered in Philadelphia by eminent men of many religious denominations in defence of "the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures." It does not afford material for the discussion of the problem of inspiration, nor does it claim to enter upon such a discussion except from one point of view. The writers have all one case to argue. Every lecture reaches one foregone conclusion. They are not investigating, but attacking. You breathe the air of theological controversy. Hard words are used; hard blows are given. A spirit so partisan, so aggressive, must sometimes be bitter, rash, even foolish and blind. It would not be difficult to give examples of all these qualities in the pages before us. Really this is not the spirit in which to approach a question so broad, so intricate, so delicate, as this of Inspiration. The book will convince nobody who needs to be convinced. It does not attract the inquirer, the honest doubter.

This is not saying that there is not some excellent material here. In collected addresses of this kind you expect inequality, and good things find themselves often in poor company. The strongest paper is that by Howard Osgood on "The Witness of Jesus." The sweetest and most catholic is that by Wayland Hoyt on "Questions concerning Inspiration." We must express unqualified astonishment at the paper of Dr. G. S. Bishop, in which not only is the strict view of mechanical inspiration defended, but even the Hebrew vowel points are claimed as inspired. Alas! that in these days there should be such blind leaders of the blind.

We rejoice in the growing interest in this matter of the inspiration of Scripture. It is the burning question of the day to which all other biblical investigations are either tributary or dependent. But this book will feed the flame, not allay it. Its cry of "no quarter" will only provoke the response of "no surrender." A spirit of gentleness and candor, of broad, honest, reverent inquiry and investigation, a judgment which is willing to wait till all the facts are in, these we crave. From whatever quarter they come we will hail with gladness their advent as encouraging the hope that the final solution of these fundamental problems is at hand.

* THE INSPIRED WORD: A series of Papers and Addresses delivered at the Bible Inspiration Conference, Philadelphia, 1887. New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Co., 1888. Price, \$1.50.